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ATTEMPTED VALIDATION OF THE SELF-DISCLOSURE INVENTORY BY THE PEER-NOMINATION TECHNIQUE*

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A. INTRODUCTION

A scale designed to measure self-disclosure has been described by Jourard in a series of papers (3, 4, 5). In the original scale, the subject indicated the extent to which he discloses specific items about the self to different target persons (mother, father, same-sex friend, opposite-sex friend, or spouse). This inventory yields disclosure scores for the different target persons and an overall score, which is the sum of the scores for the four target persons. While Jourard, in his series of studies, has been able to demonstrate construct validity for his scale, predictive or concurrent validity has proved difficult to demonstrate. For example, Lubin and Harrison (7) gave a version of the scale to management-level participants in a group-process conference and found that ratings of each participant on self-disclosing behavior in 20 hours of conference were not significantly related to total score on the inventory. In a study by Himmelstein and Kimbrough (2), a nonsignificant correlation was obtained between total score on the original form of the Jourard scale and the amount of information revealed during self-introductions in a classroom situation.

The present study represents a further effort to correlate the scale against an outside criterion. In this instance, the external criterion is judgments by peers regarding the extent to which the individual is likely to confide in others. As a check on the hypothesis that there is a relationship between confiding *in* others and being confided *to* by others, an additional peer nomination was obtained: those individuals in a group to whom one would confide.

B. METHOD

1. *Subjects*

The subjects were undergraduates in a southwestern university who were members of fraternities or sororities. These groups were selected in order to

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maximize familiarity in the social group in order that peer judgments could be based on a minimum of one semester of social contact with all members of the group.

2. *The Inventory*

The version of the Jourard inventory developed by Lubin (6) was employed. In this scale, 20 items about the self (e.g., "what do you dislike about your overall appearance?" "what are you most sensitive about?") are presented to the subject, who indicates the extent to which he has discussed the topics with specific target persons:

- 0—Never talked about a given topic to the other person.
- 1—Talked in general terms about a topic but not in full detail.
- 2—Have given full and accurate information about this topic to the other person.

The summation of weights for each target person is the score for each subject for the specific target person. The overall score is the sum of all weighted scores for all four target persons.

In the Jourard inventory adapted by Lubin and Harrison (7) and Lubin (6), the original target persons were changed to make the instrument more suitable for adults. They employed the following targets:

- a. Person you like best in your work setting.
- b. Person of the same sex you like best *outside* of work setting.
- c. Person of opposite sex that you like best *outside* of work setting.

In the present study, to make the scale more suitable for use with university students, the word "social" was substituted for "work," and "social setting" refers to the fraternity or sorority. Split-half reliability for the Inventory, after correction by the Spearman-Brown formula, was .82 for the test forms used in the present study.

3. *Procedure*

The Self-Disclosure Inventory and the peer-nomination questionnaire were given to intact groups at single sessions of weekly business meetings of fraternities and sororities. The Inventory was given first; then the nomination procedure was conducted. In the latter procedure, all subjects were given a roster of the members of the group. On the first nomination sheet, the subject was asked to select from the roster the name of the person to whom he would be most likely to tell his troubles, the second most-likely person, etc., until five names had been chosen. Next, the subject was to select the one

individual to whom he was least likely to tell his troubles; and names were selected until five names were chosen. The same procedure was employed on the second nomination sheet except that the nominations requested were those indicating persons "most likely to confide in others" and persons "least likely to confide in others."

Nominations were permitted only for those present during the experimental session, so that some restriction was imposed on the choices made by the subjects. In scoring the nomination sheets, +5 was awarded for "most likely . . ."; -5, for "least likely. . . ." Scores ranging from +4 to -4 were assigned for the choices following "most likely" and "least likely." To simplify computation, a constant was applied to remove minus scores and zeroes.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The correlations between the total score on the Self-Disclosure Inventory and the two peer nominations are given in Table 1. The correlations for

TABLE 1
RELATIONSHIP (r) BETWEEN TOTAL SCORE AND PEER NOMINATIONS

Group	N	Peer nomination		(a) vs. (b)
		"most likely to confide" (a)	"most likely to be confided in" (b)	
Fraternity				
A	19	.38	-.03	-.02
B	26	.05	-.30	-.64*
C	24	.05	.09	.39
Sorority				
A	28	.33	-.13	-.27
B	28	.17	.14	-.13

* Significant at the .01 level.

fraternities and sororities are not averaged because they differ greatly in size and sign (1, p. 173). Only one of 15 correlations reaches statistical significance, raising the possibility that the one "significant" correlation is itself a chance finding. Column 1 of Table 1 shows that, for all five social groups, there is a nonsignificant relationship between scores on the Self-Disclosure Inventory and nomination scores for "most likely to confide." This lack of relationship constitutes one more failure to demonstrate a significant relationship between the Inventory and an outside criterion of self-disclosing behavior.

Jourard (3) has suggested that "one of the necessary conditions for promoting self-disclosure in another is to volunteer it oneself" (3, p. 428). One might hypothesize, on the basis of Jourard's statement, that those who are nominated as confiders would also be nominated as individuals in whom others would confide. It is probable that the relationship, if one exists, is not a simple, monotonic one; but one might anticipate a slight positive correlation. Column 3 in Table 1 bears on this hypothesis; but it shows only one significant correlation, and that correlation is in a direction opposite to that anticipated on the basis of Jourard's suggestion. Four of the five correlations indicate a trend toward an inverse relationship between "disclosing to" and "being disclosed to."

D. SUMMARY

Fraternity and sorority groups were given the Self-Disclosure Inventory and asked to make peer nominations for "most likely to confide in others" and for "most likely to tell my troubles to." The correlation between total score on the Inventory and the first nominations were found to be non-significant, as were relationships between the two peer nominations.

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